

U.S. CAPITOL

Visitor Center



PLANNING A FIELD TRIP TO THE CAPITOL

We are delighted that you are planning a school group visit to the United States Capitol. We look forward to greeting you and your students upon your arrival. To help you plan a successful learning experience for your students, we have prepared a **“Field Trip to the U.S. Capitol”** checklist. We hope you find this information helpful. To review how a visit to the Capitol connects with the National Standards, click [here](#).

PRE-TRIP CHECKLIST

Reservations

The Capitol is open to school groups for guided tours only. Tours are conducted from 8:50 a.m. to 3:20 p.m. Monday through Saturday. (The Capitol is not available for tours on Sundays.) To reserve your guided tour, [click here to use the online reservation system](#).

You may want to include additional time in your schedule to view the House and Senate Chamber galleries and to visit your Representative and Senators’ offices. The gallery of the Senate Chamber is open to visitors when the Senate is in session and during scheduled recesses of one week or more from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The House of Representatives Chamber gallery is open to visitors when the House is in session and additionally 9 a.m. – 4:15 p.m., Monday through Friday when the House is not in session. Gallery passes may be obtained from the offices of your Senators or Representative. Visit their web sites at www.senate.gov or at www.house.gov for further information.

No passes or reservations are required to visit the Capitol Visitor Center itself, including the Exhibition Hall, the Gifts Shops and the Restaurant. (A pass is required to view the orientation film and to participate in a tour of the historic Capitol).

For information about Visitors with Disabilities, [click here](#).

How much time should we allow for a U.S. Capitol visit?

Plan to spend at least two hours viewing the 13-minute orientation film, touring the Capitol, and exploring the Exhibition Hall.

Where can we eat?

The Capitol Visitor Center Restaurant is open 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Box lunches are available for school groups. For details and to reserve lunches, contact our restaurant facility through our main number, 202.226.8000.

What should we wear?

The Capitol is a working office building. Therefore, you are expected to dress appropriately for a business environment and behave in a respectful manner. We recommend that you wear comfortable shoes (you will climb many stairs as you move through the Capitol and tour the grounds). During the spring and summer months, you may want to bring a hat (it is very sunny and hot) as well as a foldable rain poncho for sudden rainstorms during warm weather.

What may I bring and not bring on the tour?

Please review the U.S. Capitol prohibited items list [here](#). We strongly recommend that you download the list and review it carefully with your students and chaperones.

How should I prepare my students and chaperones for their visit to the Capitol?

In addition to the Prohibited Items List, also download the [Capitol Etiquette checklist](#) and distribute to your students and chaperones prior to the visit. [Click here to watch a short student orientation video.](#)

AT THE CAPITOL CHECK-LIST

What is there to do and see at the Capitol Visitor Center?

You will begin your visit to the Capitol at the Capitol Visitor Center. Upon arrival, stop at one of two information desks to pick up your passes to tour the Capitol and [brochures about the Capitol](#). Prior to your tour time, you may want to encourage the students to use the restrooms or explore the Exhibition Hall.

At the scheduled time of your tour, you should be in line in front of one of the two Orientation Theaters to view the 13-minute orientation film. Immediately following the film you will be met by your guide to tour the Capitol. At the end of your tour, your guide will return you to the Visitor Center. You are free to explore the Exhibition Hall, visit the Gift Shops, or eat in the Restaurant.

The orientation film, “Out of Many, One” illustrates how this country established a new form of government, highlights the vital role that Congress plays in the daily lives of Americans, and introduces you to the building that houses the U.S. Congress. The Exhibition Hall is dedicated to telling the story of Congress and the construction of the U.S. Capitol. Exhibit highlights include rarely seen historic documents from the National Archives and the Library of Congress, artifacts from around the country, and an 11-foot-tall touchable model of the Capitol dome. You may also watch the action on the floors of both chambers of Congress at the House and Senate theaters when Congress is in session. Numerous interactive stations allow you to discover more about Congress, its Members, and the Capitol.

Emancipation Hall, named to honor and recognize the contribution of enslaved laborers who helped build the Capitol, features a selection of some of the 100 statues

in the Capitol’s National Statuary Hall collection. The collection, prompted by legislation in 1864, includes two statues of prominent citizens from each of the 50 states.

Additionally, there are a number of special activities offered daily. [Click here for more information.](#)

Capitol Visitor Center Gift Shops

Two Gift Shops are located on the upper level. They stock a unique selection of merchandise inspired by the Capitol’s art and architectural treasures, fun and educational gifts, books, jewelry, and exciting custom-designed products. The Gift Shops are open from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Location and Directions

The Capitol is located on Capitol Hill at the east end of the Mall. A map showing entrances to the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center and the locations of Congressional office buildings is available [here](#).

AFTER YOUR VISIT

The Capitol Visitor Center and the Capitol are part of the United States Capitol Complex. In addition to the Visitor Center and the Capitol, there are many other things to see and discover.

Library of Congress <http://www.loc.gov/about/>

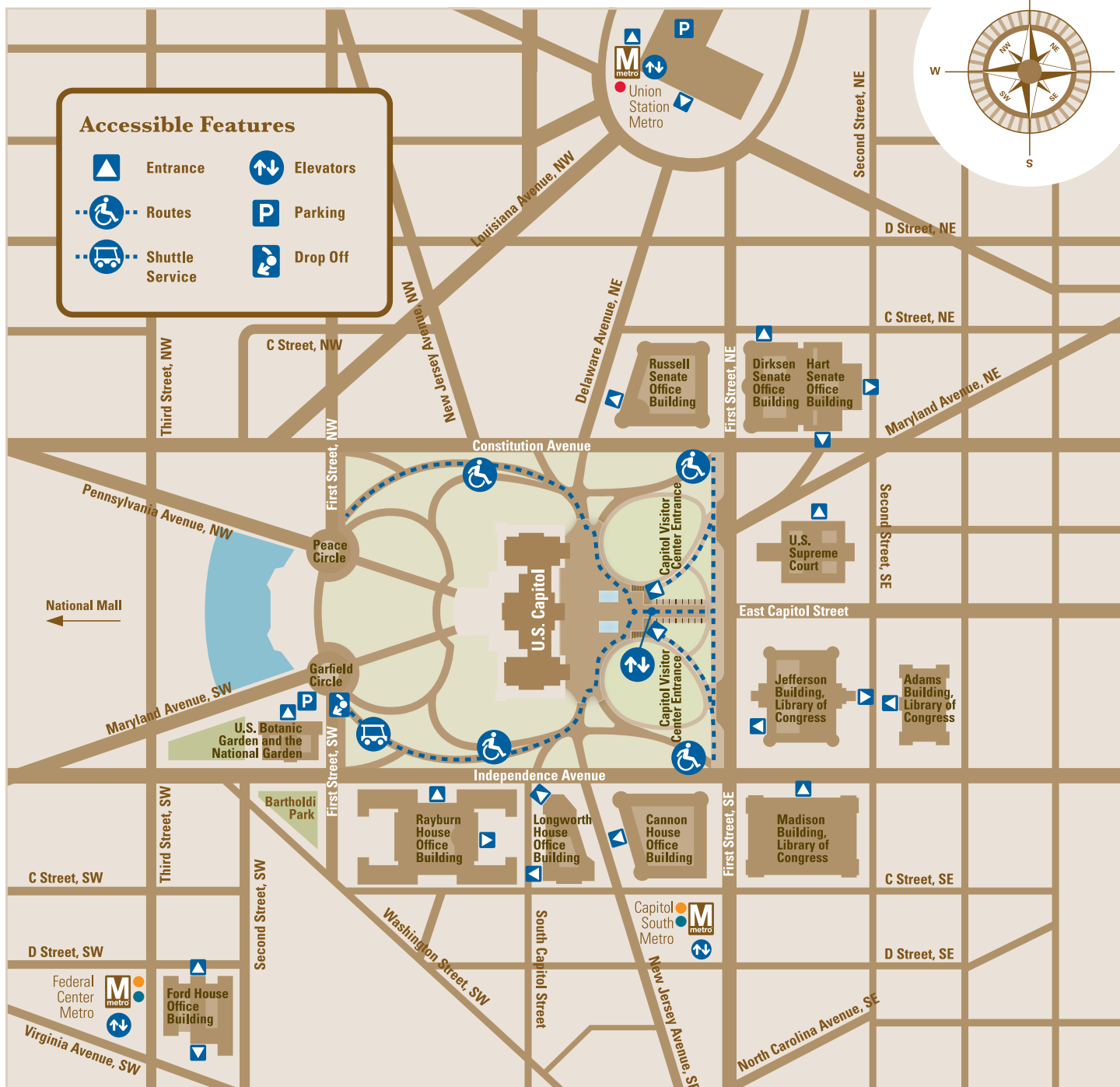
The Library of Congress, the largest library in the world, serves as the research arm of Congress. It is the nation’s oldest federal cultural institution that gives Congress and the American people access to millions of books, recordings, photographs, maps and manuscripts.

United States Botanic Garden <http://www.usbg.gov/>

The United States Botanic Garden (USBG) is run by the Congress of the United States. Highlights include a grand conservatory that holds 4,000 living species as well as a National Garden that consists of the Rose Garden, the Butterfly Garden, the Lawn Terrace, the First Ladies’ Water Garden, the Regional Garden, and an outdoor amphitheater.

The Supreme Court <http://www.supremecourtus.gov/>

The Supreme Court of the United States is the highest judicial body in the United States and has jurisdiction over all other courts in the nation. It is where the Chief Justice of the United States and eight Associate Justices preside. Public visits to the Courtroom are available on days the Court is not sitting.



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